

English Translation of the Friday Sermon Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad - Khalifatul Masih IV, On 16th July 1982 in Rabwah - Pakistan

And when My servants ask thee about Me say 'I am near. I respond to the call of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me that they may be guided aright.

The Holy Quran. Al Baqarah [The Heifer]: 187.

The blessed month of Ramadan, the last ten days of this month, and this very day – The Farewell Friday of the blessed month of Ramadan have a special distinctive position.

Today, in the entire Muslim world, two types of people have gathered to see off this day. One type are those who are extremely worried whether they have actually benefitted from the blessed month of Ramadan or not. They beseech Allah the Sublime by saying: O Master! We bid farewell to this Friday with such sentiments and sincerity, that Thou empower us to be benefitted through the blessings of this Friday, and those of this blessed month during the whole year. We beg Thee, do not take back the pleasure of the bounty which Thou hast made us to taste through Thy worship. Grant perpetuity to this pleasure of Thy Love. We bid farewell to this environment and to the blessings of this Ramadan with these good wishes that the blessings of this environment would not depart.

It is a pity that a lot of people instead of bidding farewell in this way, practically express their opinion by saying 'We have passed these days with bitterness under burden and trouble, we beg Thee, grant us our one wish, that for the troubles we have suffered, turn the prayers and services of this single day to suffice the prayers and services of the entire year. Of course they do not utter these with their mouths, but that alone is the explanation which could be given of their action and supplications. Apparently they desire to deceive God through their worship, but God the Sublime says to them: If you wish fidelity from God then you too render fidelity to Him; if you desire Allah's Love then show love to Him.

There are two kinds of God's favours in the world. One manifests His attribute of *Rahman* [Grace], for which He asks nothing. But His second manifestation is acquired by begging Him through prayer. The prayer demands a two-way link with God the Exalted. If you desire the acceptance of prayer, then you have to respond to God's injunctions - '*And when My servants ask thee about Me say 'I am near. I respond to the call of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me that they may be guided aright.*'

The two factors of this verse are worthy of attention. Firstly, God said: Whenever My servants ask thee of Me, then I am near.' The very words used in it negate any question of distance and that of any barrier in-between.

The important point here described by God is: O Muhammad, Messenger of God (peace and blessings of God be upon him) when they ask from thee (here the word *from thee* is important), when they ask from thee of Me, it is then I am near. Herein a vast philosophy of exploration has been described. Each search and exploration has its own etiquettes. The explorers of oil, metal, diamonds and gems do not have response from the wellsprings of oil

by their mere voices. They have to acquire the services of experts and utilize particular instruments for this purpose. Contrarily, if even millions of people go out in search of oil they will not find it unless they get in contact with the experts or learn that science.

Likewise, God has said: O Muhammad! As long as the world is not turning towards thee, they cannot find God. And when they will turn towards thee they will find Me directly. In using the word عِبَاد [‘My servants’], there is an expression of the kindness of God the Sublime. Its example is like that of a restless mother, who went out to search for her child who is in the possession of some person. In her worry, she asks each one she meets regarding her child, until she reaches the person who has her child, and he informs her with love and affection that her child is with him. At such a time what would be the joy of that mother, God the Sublime says, you have approached Muhammad the Immaculate (peace and blessings of God be upon him) hence, O seeker! Thou art congratulated, that اِنِّى قَرِيبٌ [‘I am near’]. This guides us to the conclusion that the more closeness one attains to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) the more nearness one shall have to God the Sublime.

Some people who associate others with God, say: We take idols as means of approach to God as you take Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) as a way of approach for your relationship to God. Its clarification is this, that, the love of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him), his company and his perfect obedience is a way of approach for acquiring the communion with God. Once you adopt completely the model of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him), then as far as the communion with God is concerned, He says, He Himself shall respond directly to each one who will supplicate to Him, and there shall be no barrier between Him and His servant. Nevertheless, one has to act upon His injunctions, respond to His call; not consider the services of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) as substitute for his services, and perform actions done by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him). Otherwise, their services would be of no avail to them, because the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) responded in the best way to the call of his God, and consequently Allah also loved him greatly.

Allah the sublime has put forth the condition for the acceptance of the prayer of His servants, which is that they should respond to his call through complete obedience to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him). If this is not followed, then, God the Exalted declares the prayers of such disobedient persons unaccepted. It does not mean, God forbid, that the prestige of the Holy Prophet is diminishing, rather God has expressed His inevitable principle, that the prayers are accepted when they are not one-sided and God's command is also obeyed. The same procedure is applies to the chain of the Caliphate.

Numerous people had been writing to Hazrat Musleh Maud, Khalifatul Masih III, and to me for prayer. I consider myself of no value, and my inner condition is indescribable, yet, it is God, who has entrusted me with the office of the Caliphate, and it is due to this office that people write to me for prayer It is to keep in mind, that if an Ahmadi has no love for the office of the Caliphate –If he has no true love with its position, then even the prayers of the Caliph of the time shall not be accepted for him. Because practical obedience is essential with the verbal confession. With such people, we have witnessed the dealings of God the Sublime, that at the time when the application for prayer is being written and even though the prayer has not been made, that the prayer is accepted already. This is a basic principle every

Ahmadi should take as a guideline, that Allah the Sublime shall only hear the supplications of one who keeps true fidelity with the Caliphate.

May Allah enable the Ahmadiyya Community to understand the true meaning of prayer, and may this Friday – The Farewell Friday be the cause of farewell for those who did not come to see off the mosque and the worship of God, rather they have come weeping to bid farewell to that particular environment. Today's Friday and today's prayer are only for these people, and today's environment of the mosque is blessed only for these people. And these three things shall ever remain faithful to them *Inshallah*.

I did urge in my last Friday sermon to pray for the honourable acquittal of some Ahmadi from a cause of headache for the Ahmadiyya Community since a long time. I congratulate the Community, that God the Exalted heard their supplications and released that innocent person from the case. We must express gratitude for the favour of God the Sublime to such an extent that we could benefit fully from His treasures. Increase your gratitude so that the promise of God of giving abundantly may continue to be fulfilled.